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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0120  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0014  
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 0040

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANGOLA: President Dos Santos Surprise Departure to Brazil

1. (SBU) Summary: Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos unexpectedly left Luanda on Sunday, April 9, 2006, for Brazil for a two week visit, billed as vacation. Rumors have begun to fly about Luanda that he is very ill and has returned to Brazil for medical treatment. End Summary.

2. (SBU) The Office of the President officially announced on April 10, 2006, that Angolan President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos began a two week vacation on April 9, 2006, which would be spent in Angola and in Brazil. However, the press release also announced that dos Santos had departed for Brazil on that same day. Dos Santos owns a large farm in the Northeast of Brazil, but he has reportedly traveled to Sao Paulo. Most Angolans believe that dos Santos is suffering from prostate cancer, though it has never been officially announced. However, given the immediacy of this return trip to Brazil, where dos Santos was treated at a hospital in Rio de Janeiro just over two weeks ago, rumors are spreading that he is ill with something much more serious than prostate cancer. Most believe that he returned to Angola to prove that he is healthy and to receive Portuguese Prime Minister Socrates. (Note: The official press release for dos Santos' March 22 Rio hospital stay named an allergic reaction to iodine as the cause. End Note.)

3. (U) The press release announcing dos Santos' trip also stated that in accordance with Angola's Constitution, Roberto de Almeida, President of the National Assembly will serve as Acting President in dos Santos' absence.

4. (SBU) There is also some speculation that the house cleaning started with the arrest of former Intelligence service chief Miala will continue in dos Santos' absence.  
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